

Message Text

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INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 CEA-01 STR-07 /121 W
-----021485 221716Z /42

R 221645Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7443
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
ALL EC CAPITALS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 12351

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, EEC, XA
SUBJ: EC COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON COMMENTS ON HIS RECENT
VISIT TO TANZANIA, SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 9732 (B) BRUSSELS 8417

1. SUMMARY: DURING A CONVERSATION JUNE 20 BETWEEN
CHARGE AND EC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER CLAUDE CHEYSSON,
THE LATTER PROVIDED A READOUT ON HIS MAY 22-28 TRIP TO
DAR ES SALAAM, MOGADISCIO AND ADDIS (REF A). IN PASSING,
CHEYSSON MENTIONED THE "PRIVILEGED" ACCESS TO SOMALI AND
ETHIOPIAN LEADERS HE ENJOYS AS EC COMMISSIONER, STEMMING,
IN PART, FROM THE "APOLITICAL" CHARACTER OF THE LOME
CONVENTION. CHEYSSON FOUND NYRERE FRETFUL OVER THE PACE
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OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. COMMISSIONER IS SERIOUSLY CON-
CERNED ABOUT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATIONS IN
SOMALIA; HE CONSIDERS SIAD BARRE PSYCHOLOGICALLY DIS-
ORIENTED. HE BELIEVES MENGISTU HAS CONSOLIDATED HIS
POSITION IN ETHIOPIA AND IS BEGINNING TO HAVE A MORE
SOPHISTICATED UNDERSTANDING OF EAST-WEST PROBLEMS. END
SUMMARY.

2. TANZANIA. WHILE HIS COMMENTS ON HIS MAY 22-23 VISIT TO TANZANIA WERE LIMITED, CHEYSSON NOTED THAT GOT IS MAKING SLOW BUT REGULAR PROGRESS IN OVERCOMING ADMINISTRATIVE, MANPOWER AND OTHER DIFFICULTIES AS IT PURSUES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. DESPITE HIS LONG ACQUAINTANCE WITH TANZANIA, THE COMMISSIONER CONTINUES TO BE STRUCK BY THE COUNTRY'S ANTIQUATED COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM AND THE POORLY MANAGED, INEFFICIENT PORT OF DAR ES SALAAM. COMMENTING ON HIS RECENT TALKS WITH NYRERE, CHEYSSON FOUND THE TANZANIAN PRESIDENT IN A "BITTER" MOOD AND MANIFESTLY DISAPPOINTED WITH HIS OWN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS, AS WELL AS TANZANIA'S DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS. BASED ON THESE CONVERSATION IN DAR, CHEYSSON BELIEVES NYRERE HAS COME TO REALIZE THAT THE USSR IS NOT A USEFUL "DEVELOPMENT PARTNER" IN THE LONG RUN.

3. SOMALIA. TURNING TO HIS SOMALIA VISIT(MAY 24-25), CHEYSSON SAID HE CAME AWAY DISTRESSED BECAUSE OF THE GRIM ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OUTLOOK THERE. WHILE THE SOMALI PEOPLE, IN CHEYSSON'S VIEW, ARE FORMIDABLE, THE ABRUPT SOVIET PULLOUT HAS LEFT THE ECONOMY IN UTTER DISARRAY. AS A RESULT, ROUGHLY 50 PERCENT OF THE QUALIFIED TECHNICIANS GRADUATING EACH YEAR FROM SOMALI SCHOOLS REPORTEDLY LEAVE TO FIND WORK IN THE OIL-PRODUCING STATES AROUND THE PERSIAN GULF. SIMILARLY, THE ARMY OFFICER STAFF HAS BEEN

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AFFLICTED BY DESERTIONS TO KENYA. IN CHEYSSON'S OPINION, HOWEVER, THE MOST WORRISOME ASPECT OF THE SITUATION IN MOGADISCIO IS THE "PSYCHOTIC" CONDITION OF SIAD BARRE, WHOM THE COMMISSIONER RECENTLY SAW FOR TWO HOURS. CHEYSSON DESCRIBED BARRE AS UNDER SEVERE "NERVOUS STRAIN," SUFFERING FROM ISOLATION AND SHOWING SIGNS OF LOSS OF TOUCH WITH REALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE COMMISSIONER'S VISIT BARRE SEEMED PREOCCUPIED WITH THE PROSPECT OF WORLD WAR "WITHIN A FEW MONTHS"; HE ALSO BELIEVES ETHIOPIA AND TANZANIA ARE UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL, AND THAT KENYA WILL SOON FOLLOW SUIT. TROUBLED BY BARRE'S CONDITION AND APPEARANCE, CHEYSSON SAID HE SUGGESTED TO THE SOMALI PRESIDENT THAT HE SHOULD TRAVEL ABROAD IN ORDER TO REGAIN PERSPECTIVE. WHILE THE EC-9 AMBASSADORS POSTED IN MOGADISCIO TOLD COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON THAT THE ALLEGED COUP D'ETAT SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS AGO CAUSED ONLY A RIPPLE (AND WAS MOPPED UP WITHIN THREE HOURS), CHEYSSON'S PERSONAL VIEW IS THAT IF BARRE CONTINUES IN HIS PRESENT STATE HE IS LIKELY TO BE THE VICTIM OF A COUP IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE MORE SO BECAUSE OF THE PARALYSIS IN THE GOS CAUSED BY THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM, SUBORDINATING INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES TO A CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

4. ON THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF SOMALIA'S REQUEST TO THE EC FOR PROJECT AND OTHER AID TO REPLACE THAT ABANDONED BY THE USSR (REF B), CHEYSSON SAID THAT TWELVE OF THE THIRTEEN PROJECTS ON THE GOS LIST WERE NOW FULLY COVERED BY EITHER THE EC MEMBER STATES OR THE COMMUNITY AS SUCH. THE TWELFTH PROJECT (MECHANIZED AGRICULTURE) WOULD NOT BE FUNDED, HOWEVER.

5. ETHIOPIA. CHEYSSON WAS STRUCK BY THE CHANGE IN MENGISTU'S DEMEANOR SINCE THE COMMISSIONER'S 1977 VISIT TO ADDIS. A YEAR AGO, CHEYSSON RECOUNTED, MENGISTU WAS SOMEWHAT RAMBLING AND ERRATIC IN CONVERSATION, BUT DURING THEIR RECENT TALKS MENGISTU IMPRESSED THE COMMISSIONER BY CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS APPARENT POISE AND DECISIVENESS. CHEYSSON ATTRIBUTES

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THIS CHANGE TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST MENGISTU PROBABLY RECEIVED FROM THE VICTORY IN OGADEN; IT IS NOT LIKELY THE ETHIOPIAN LEADER CAN BE DISLODGED FROM POWER AT THIS POINT, IN CHEYSSON'S VIEW. ALSO, MENGISTU HAS RECENTLY TRAVELLED WIDELY AND APPEARS TO BE DEVELOPING A MORE SOPHISTICATED SENSE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS.

6. MENGISTU OBSERVED, IN RESPONSE TO CHEYSSON'S QUESTIONS ON ERITREA, THAT HIS HANDS ARE NOT COMPLETELY FREE. HE SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE PROFOUND SOCIAL REVOLUTION OCCURRING IN THE REST OF ETHIOPIA, HE COULD NOT INSIST TOO STRONGLY ON PRIVILEGED STATUS FOR INDIVIDUAL GROUPS IN ERITREA WITHOUT RISKING SIMILAR DEMANDS FROM OTHER MINORITY ELEMENTS IN ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY. MENGISTU THEN PROVIDED A DOCTRINAIRE, LENINIST "NATIONALITIES" EXPLANATION.
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TION OF HIS APPROACH TOWARD ERITREA, BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE LATTER IS NOT A "SCIENTIFIC" BUT A COLONIALIST ENTITY. GIVEN THIS PREMISE, MENGISTU CONSIDERS ONE GROUP (THE AMHARA) TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY IN ERITREA, WHILE OTHER RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS MUST BE SUBSERVIENT TO THE MAJORITY. HENCE, MENGISTU TOLD CHEYSSON, THE SITUATION IN ERITREA CANNOT BE EQUATED WITH THAT IN OGADEN. WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER, THE ETHIOPIAN LEADER SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO CRUSH INTERVENTION BY A FOREIGN FORCE; IN THE FORMER, ETHIOPIA'S OBJECTIVE IS ONLY TO PRESERVE THE RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION. CHEYSSON QUOTED MENGISTU AS SAYING "IF THERE WERE BLOODSHED IN ERITREA, WE WOULD HAVE LOST THE BATTLE." ON THE BASIS OF MENGISTU'S REMARKS, CHEYSSON INFERS THAT THERE WILL BE NO ALL-OUT, HEAD-ON ATTACK AGAINST ERITREA, ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT EXCLUDE LIMITED ETHIOPIAN OPERATIONS POSSIBLY AIMED AT CUTTING ASSAB AND MASSAWA FROM THE REST OF ERITREA.

7. ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, INCLUDING EC AID FOR ETHIOPIA UNDER THE LOME CONVENTION, CHEYSSON SAID THAT 120 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT IS AVAILABLE, OF WHICH ABOUT 40 PERCENT IS COMMITTED TO DATE. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS FOR WHICH FUNDS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED HAS BEEN UNEVEN: PROJECTS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR ARE GOING WELL, WHILE THOSE IN LOW-COST HOUSING, SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOSPITALS ARE FARING POORLY.

8. CHEYSSON CONCLUDED BY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS ADMIRATION FOR THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE BASED ON THEIR REMARKABLE HISTORY AND TRADITION. IN THE COMMISSIONER'S VIEW, IF THE POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION IN THE HORN SHOULD QUIET

DOWN IN THE FUTURE, THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS WOULD BE
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CHALLENGED TO SHOW THEIR TRUE SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIP FOR
THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. THIS WOULD NO DOUBT PRESENT
A PROBLEM BECAUSE THE USSR IS WIDELY KNOWN TO BE A WEAK
PARTNER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. UNDER THESE CIRCUM-
STANCES, CHEYSSON CONCLUDES THE SOVIETS MIGHT TRY TO
IMPOSE DECISIONS ON THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH
POSSIBLY WOULD LEAD TO THEIR EXPULSION FROM ADDIS, THUS,
OVERALL, CHEYSSON BELIEVES EUROPE AND THE WEST HAVE A
SOUND, LONG-TERM POLICY REGARDING THE HORN: HE ARGUES
THE WEST SHOULD CONTINUE TO "MAINTAIN A PRESENCE" THERE
AND PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC AID TO BOTH SOMALIA
AND ETHIOPIA, NO MATTER WHAT THE EVENTUAL POLITICAL
COLORATION OF THE GOVERNMENTS IN THE FUTURE. HINTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BRUSSE12351
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780260-1105
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780632/aaaabbio.tel
Line Count: 244
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 52a6bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BRUSSELS 9732, 78 BRUSSELS 8417
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2253248
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EC COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON COMMENTS ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO TANZANIA, SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA
TAGS: EAID, XA, EEC, (CHEYSSON, CLAUDE)
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/52a6bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014